THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECT OF AUDIENCE ON THE ORAL LANGUAGE OF MIDDLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled An Investigation of the Effect of Audience on the Oral Language of Middle Elementary School Children submitted by Helen T. Lewis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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ABSTRACT

Theorists from diverse fields have identified the audience (or addressee) as a vital component of any "communication situation." Moreover, this relationship between speaker and spoken-to is thought by many to play an important role in language development and may even have a differential effect on children from different social backgrounds. Very little data, however, seem to exist which substantiate (or refute) these theories.

The purpose of this study was thus to investigate whether middle elementary school children do modify their language as a function of audience and, if so, whether differences occur in the modifications made by children of different socio-economic backgrounds.

The sample consisted of one group of 15 grade four girls of high socio-economic status and another group of 15 grade four girls of low socio-economic status.

Each of the subjects spoke on the same topic to three different audiences: peer, grade six girl and unfamiliar adult. The subjects met the audiences on a one-to-one basis and in a randomized order. Responses were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Two distinct forms of analysis were employed. Firstly, two-way analyses of variance (with repeated measures on Factor B) were performed on the subjects' scores for the chosen syntactic measures and on the duration of their responses. Secondly, all intra-subject differences in the language protocols, which occurred as a function of audience, were recorded and categorized.

The results of the statistical analysis indicated a significant

interaction effect between socio-economic status and audience regarding clause usage. No significant results, however, were recorded for maze and pronoun usage. Results also indicated a significant difference between the two groups on the duration of their responses.

The results of the descriptive analysis indicated the existence of five categories of change. Although the amount of change exhibited by the two groups was similar, a difference was evident in the kinds of change identified for each group.

The findings of this exploratory study suggest that although further investigation of the relationship between audience and the syntactic measures chosen by the investigator would not be worthwhile, the categories of change formulated do warrant future study. Moreover, the tendency of the two groups to perform most similarly with the grade six audience and least similarly with the unfamiliar adult audience indicates a need for further investigation of the nature of the relationship between audience, socio-economic status and oral language.

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Society exists because men have language: consequently exploring language cannot stop at the boundaries of language, but must go on to look at the social context which makes the activity of languaging meaningful.

(Doughty, 1972, p. 63)

Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the past language tended to be viewed in terms of a simple dichotomy—words and expressions were either correct or incorrect. Today, however, theorists such as Bruner (1966), Gahagan and Gahagan (1970) and Wilkinson (1971) would agree with McFetridge (1969) that:

> There is nothing in the language that is inherently correct, and we can speak only of the need to use language appropriately. (p. 2)

The "appropriateness" of a communication depends, of course, on the "communication situation" which itself comprises a number of components, each of which, in turn, may affect language production. The identification of these components has interested theorists in diverse fields (see Hymes, 1972). Ervin-Tripp (1968), Fishman (1971), Hymes (1972) and Wilkinson (1971) are but a few who attempt to formulate some schema (or model) of speech acts. The components identified show a greater or lesser degree of elaboration, depending on the concern of the author. Wilkinson (1971), for example, identifies four principal elements in any communication situation, namely an addressor, an addressee, a subject and a context. Hymes (1972), on the other hand, identifies no fewer than 16 components which he groups under the mnemonic S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G (Setting, Participants, Ends, Act, Sequences, Keys, Instrumentalities, Norms and Genres).

Whatever their concern, however, one vital element of the speech act which all theorists identify is that of audience or

addressee. As Moffett (1975) points out:

> There is no speech without a speaker in some relation to a spoken-to.

Many theorists point to this relationship between speaker and spoken-to as being of prime importance in language development. Harris (1975) maintains that our understanding of language learning "remains impoverished until descriptive acts are placed within the setting of social and productive interaction." He says:

> Linguistic structures are, strictly speaking, the synthesis of this interaction of speaker/listener. (Harris, 1975, p. 84)

The theories of Werner and Kaplan (1967), Vygotsky (1962), Piaget (1948) and Moffett (1968) all suggest, in their own way, that development along the language growth continua (implicit—explicit, specific—general, fluency—control, concrete—abstract) is due to the gradual distancing of the child and his audience—from self, to mothering one, to peers, to "generalized others." As the psychological distance increases between addressor and addressee there is a need for the language employed in communication to become more explicit and more general, a modification which, according to Bernstein, the restricted code user does not make.

Despite this theoretical importance placed on audience, however, very little data seem to exist which substantiate (or refute) these theories.

Although many sociolinguists, for example, point to the importance of audience in the communication situation (Hymes, 1972; Ervin-Tripp, 1968) and even to its importance when studying the language of different subcultures or social classes (Cazden, 1970)

most sociolinguistic research has focussed on a bilingual situation (e.g., Greenfield, 1972) or has varied the whole of the communication situation along a formal-informal dimension rather than concentrating solely on the effect of audience (e.g., Labov, 1970).

The most fruitful area for studies which have taken account of the role of audience appears to be the research into Piaget's notion of egocentrism. By and large, however, these studies have focussed on the pre-school child, despite the assertion of Flavell et al. (1968) that in middle childhood "widespread changes in role-taking and communication skills" are taking place. Even those studies which have taken a developmental approach have "artificially" distanced the audience by means of a screen, or blind-fold, or have used a photograph to represent the audience rather than a real person (Flavell et al., 1968; Krauss & Glucksberg, 1977). Moreover, the question of <u>how</u> the child modifies his language as a function of audience has tended to be regarded as of secondary importance. The question of <u>whether</u> a child modifies his language and whether this modification increases with age, has taken precedence in studies of this sort. The question of whether sociological background affects the ability to modify language as a function of audience appears to have been ignored.

In sum, then, although theorists are in general agreement that audience is a vital factor affecting the appropriateness of communication, no research can be found which examines the effect of audience on the language of children in the middle elementary school. Moreover, despite an abundance of comparisons of the language of

children from different sub-cultures or socio-economic backgrounds, there does not appear to be any evidence as to whether audience has a differential effect on the language of children from different backgrounds.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the following general questions:

1. In what ways, if any, do middle-elementary school children modify their language as a function of an increasingly remote audience?

2. Can differences be discerned in the modifications made (as a function of audience) in the oral language of middle elementary school children of different socio-economic backgrounds?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Tough (1977) warns of

> the dangers of interpreting results that are obtained when linguistic measures are used without close examination of the demands of the situations in which the language samples were gathered. (p. 165)

She maintains that a descriptive analysis should be conducted to complement a more objective form of analysis, the value of the descriptive mode lying in "the insights that it provides when inferences are being drawn from more objective data" (Tough, 1977, p. 154).

Thus, for purposes of analysis, the general questions which the present study sought to investigate were refined to form the following specific research questions:

Question One

Does audience have a significant effect on the oral language responses of the subjects as witnessed in:

a. the following syntactic measures:

clause usage

pronoun usage

maze usage

b. the duration of the response?

Question Two

Does audience have a differential effect on the language produced by subjects of high and low socio-economic status, as witnessed in the above measures?

Question Three

What categories of change (if any) occur in the subjects' oral language to accommodate for an increasingly remote audience?

Question Four

Do differences exist between the high and low socio-economic groups in the kinds of changes which are made as a function of audience?

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

Addressor - the person with whom a communication originates.

Audience/Addressee - these two terms are used synonymously in this study and refer to the person/persons to whom a communication

is addressed.

High and Low Socio-Economic Status (SES) - No established measure was used to determine the subjects' SES, rather administrative personnel of the Edmonton Public School Board chose schools which they assessed as being representative of a certain type of community.

It should be noted that the study does not assume that the two groups chosen represent so-called "restricted" and "elaborated" code users.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The sample comprised two groups of 15 girls. The subjects were drawn from four schools within the Edmonton Public School system. Administrative personnel of the Edmonton Public School Board identified two of the schools as serving a high socio-economic community and two of them as serving a low socio-economic community. Thus, one group of subjects was drawn from a population of high socio-economic status (SES), and the other group was drawn from a population of low SES.

The criteria for selection of the subjects were:

a. an IQ score within the range 101-120, as measured by the Canadian Test of Cognitive Abilities.

b. age between 9 years 6 months and 10 years 2 months.

c. English as the first language of all subjects.

PROCEDURE

Each of the subjects spoke on the same topic (namely, a "scary" experience), to three different audiences: peer (from the same class), grade six girl (from the same school), unfamiliar adult.

The subjects met the audiences in a randomized order, in an attempt to limit the effect of practice.

The responses were recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

A pilot study tested the suitability of the topic of conversation prior to the investigation.

TREATMENT OF THE DATA

All intra-subject differences in the language protocols which occurred as a function of audience were recorded and categorized.

Two-way analysis of variance (Factor A being SES and Factor B being audience), with repeated measures on Factor B, were performed on the subjects' scores for the chosen syntactic measures and on the duration of their responses.

LIMITATIONS

The following factors limit the interpretation of the findings:

1. Responses were elicited in a testing situation and may have been influenced by the presence of a tape recorder.

2. The sample was limited in both size and age and thus generalizations cannot be made.

3. Although the effect of practice as a confounding variable was eliminated from the analysis by randomizing the order in which

the subjects met the audiences, some subjects might have found it boring to repeat the same content to all three audiences.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A communication situation of any kind is made up of a number of elements and, of course, "the language which comes out arises from the contributions of the various elements, and will vary from situation to situation" (Wilkinson, 1971, p. 37).

So often, however, our language arts programs fail to consider the components of communication in any systematic way. Even if we offer our pupils a variety of situations, rarely do we juxtapose the elements of those situations in any new or challenging way, thereby perhaps limiting the students' potential use of language.

In investigating the implications of the literature and research for one component of communication (namely audience) the present study is of potential significance in the future planning of instruction, curriculum development and further research.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND RATIONALE

INTRODUCTION

Many theorists (see, for example, Ervin-Tripp, 1968; Fishman 1971; Hymes, 1972; Wilkinson, 1971) identify the addressee or audience as a vital component of any communication situation. According to certain psychologists the addressee plays a vital role in language development, and implicit in the writings of Bernstein is the suggestion that restricted code users do not modify their language as a function of audience. However, by and large, research on the language of children in the middle elementary school has treated the language producer as a distinct entity, separate from and unaffected by, any situational variables. The present study attempts to investigate the effect of one such situational variable, namely the audience.

This chapter outlines the framework for the study.

Section I explores theories of the effect of audience on language production which have influenced the investigator. The section begins with a discussion of Werner and Kaplan's distancing hypothesis, the ideas of which are central to the present study. Although in many ways representing diverse views, relevant aspects of the work of both Vygotsky and Piaget are also discussed. The fourth study presented, that of James Moffett, represents a slightly different

approach. Although Moffett is an educational theorist rather than a psychologist, he, too, sees the 'distance' between addressor and addressee as having a vital effect on language production. A discussion of Bernstein's work in terms of Werner and Kaplan's distancing hypothesis follows Moffett's theory. This comparison serves to bring out that which is only implicit in Bernstein's work, namely that a restricted code is not restricted primarily in terms of linguistic structure, but in terms of the audience for whom it is appropriate.

The section concludes with a discussion of the work of Joan Tough. Although Tough is no theorist, her work is included because of the importance which she places on audience in the interpretation of her findings.

Studies which have examined the variable of audience are cited in Section II. Most of these studies are concerned with Piaget's notion of egocentrism or decentring and provide a necessary background to the present study.

Concluding the chapter is a review of Sections I and II in terms of the purpose of this study.

SECTION I: THEORIES OF THE EFFECT OF AUDIENCE ON LANGUAGE PRODUCTION

Werner and Kaplan

The approach to the study of language taken by Werner and Kaplan is an organismic-developmental one:

> We hold that analysis should not be directed toward an organism in isolation, but an organism embedded in its own vital field or "umwelt." (Werner and Kaplan, 1967, p. 5)

Thus, symbol (or language) development should be viewed not merely in terms of the language producer but in terms of four principal components: two persons—an addressor and an addressee—the object of reference or the referent, and the symbolic vehicle employed in referential representation. In the course of development, each of these principal components comprising symbol-situations undergoes change and become related to each other in different ways. Werner and Kaplan maintain that in the course of development there is a progressive distancing or polarization between person and object of reference, between person and symbolic vehicle, between symbolic vehicle and object and then central to the whole process is the distancing between the persons in the communication situation, that is, the addressor and addressee.

The theory is presented graphically in Figure 1, where the four distancing processes, hypothesized by Werner and Kaplan, are marked.

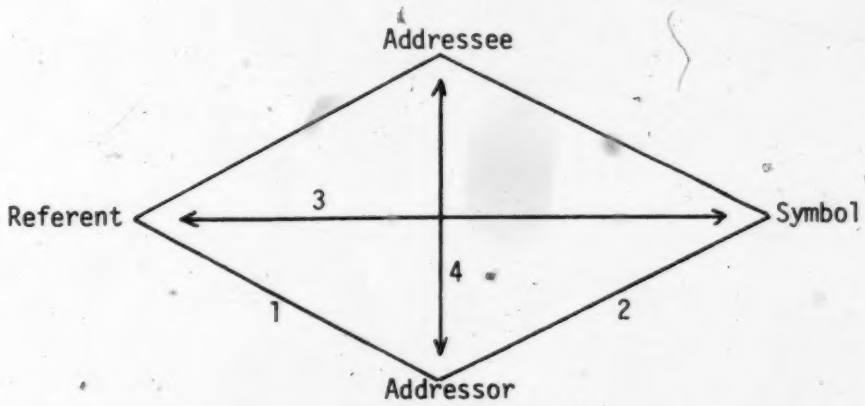

Figure 1

The Distancing Processes

The process begins with the "primordial sharing situation" which takes place between child and mothering one. The very young child is viewed as an egocentric being in the sense that he cannot differentiate between himself and his environment. The process of differentiation (known as distantiation) for the child is only gradual and is a process in which language plays a key role.

The first "distancing" process which takes place is that between child ("addressor" on the diagram) and the objects (referents) of his environment. Gradually the child comes to realise that objects exist apart from himself and so he begins to point at them and later to name them when they are not even present.

Analagous to the increasing polarization between person and object, the person and symbolic vehicle he employs for representation also become increasingly differentiated from each other. In practical terms this distancing is witnessed in the child's early idiosyncratic expressions which have meaning only to himself and, perhaps, his mother. Gradually, however, these terms are displaced by those which have a more "public" meaning.

> At genetically later stages of symbol formation, the inter-personal vehicle is more or less freed of private and idiosyncratic connotations and serves to represent relatively the same content for the communicants. (Werner & Kaplan, 1963, p. 46)

The third "distancing process" which takes place during development is that between symbolic vehicle and referential object. At first the symbol and object are treated as one and the same thing. Vygotsky (1962) illustrates this phenomenon when he describes an experiment in which children are first told that cows are to be called

dogs and then asked if dogs have horns. It was found that only at advanced stages does the child outgrow the phenomenon of word realism (whereby word and object are thought to be one and the same), and come to realise that the symbolic vehicle is arbitrary and has no "thing-like" status.

The fourth and final "distancing process" is seen by Werner and Kaplan as being all-important and is the gradual distancing which takes place between addressor and addressee. This increase in interpersonal distance is a highly significant factor in the development of symbolization. As mentioned earlier, the very young child does not differentiate himself from others—he is a "we" not an "I." Hence his language is idiosyncratic and its meaning implicit as he assumes a shared context with the person to whom he is speaking. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in the language of twins who often develop a form of language unique to themselves until quite a late stage of development. As the child begins to appreciate the distance which exists between himself and others, his audience (or addressee) gradually changes from mothering one, to peers, to generalised other. Hence his language develops in order to cope with this increasing distance between himself and his audience. We may, in fact, imagine language as a bridge, a link between one person and another. If the person being addressed is "near," in other words shares the same context, then the bridge does not need to be particularly "strong." Hence a mother understands a child's holophrases and a husband understands a wife's "elliptical" references. If, however, the addressee is "distant" then in order for the interpersonal distance

to be spanned effectively, the structure of the "bridge" is of supreme importance. No longer can language by idiosyncratic and meaning implicit if effective communication is to be achieved.

In sum, then, Werner and Kaplan maintain that these four polarizations

> bear all-importantly on the autonomization of symbols, that is, on the development toward a system of vehicles which enables a person to communicate adequately with an audience psychologically quite distant from the addressor. (Werner & Kaplan, 1963, p. 49)

An experiment which was carried out by Luria and Yudovitch provides a practical example of the implications of the distancing hypothesis for language development.

Luria and Yudovitch (1959) chose for their subjects a pair of five-year-old twins whose social speech was severely retarded but, like many twins, they communicated adequately with one another. The children were separated and placed in a normal social environment and after only ten months, there was a marked difference between their other-directed and self-directed speech. After only three months of separation, comprehensibility increased from 17% to 89% in Twin A and from 22% to 81% in twin B; after ten months of separation, comprehensibility was perfect (100%) for both twins (Luria and Yudovitch, 1959, p. 65). There was also a concomitant improvement in sentence structure. Werner and Kaplan (1967) maintain that,

> the principal factor underlying the remarkable change in sentence organization was the increase in "distance" between addressor and addressee. (p. 320)

Werner and Kaplan, however, are not alone in recognising that the whole process of development is one of increasing individualisation,

in the sense that only through an increasing awareness of self does the child develop a need to make communication more explicit.

Vygotsky

The Russian psychologist Vygotsky, for example, also sees development as a process of individualisation which, he believes, is reflected in the structure and function of speech (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 133).

In the early pre-school years speech is at once private and social, with no real differentiation between speech for self and speech for others. "All of [a child's] speech is overt and equally personal and public in orientation" (Flavell et al., 1968, p. 20). Thus Vygotsky talks of the distancing during development between these two speech forms (inner and external speech).

> The fusion of the two planes of speech, semantic and vocal, begins to break down as the child grows older and the distance between them gradually increases. (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 129)

Since inner and external speech subserve distinctive functions—inner speech serving thought and external speech serving social communication—a gradual polarization occurs of the characteristics of each type. Whereas social (external) speech becomes progressively more elaborate and complex as mastery of the language increases, in inner speech there is a tendency towards predication. Thus, inner speech appears to be largely made up only of the "key words" of external speech. As Flavell et al. point out, if this really is the form of private speech, it is obvious why egocentric speech is so unlikely to meet the listener's informational requirements.

They say:

> Vygotsky's conceptions . . . point up the wide gulf which is liable to exist between speaker and listener, with the corollary that the everyday business of bridging this gulf in adult communication entails no mean skill. (Flavell et al., 1968, p. 21)

Vygotsky is careful to point out, however, that communications approximating to inner speech are not restricted to childhood but are, in fact, common among people who "live in close psychological contact," such as a husband and wife.

Piaget

Piaget is another psychologist for whom the addressee (or audience) plays a significant role in language development.

Piaget believes that the speech of young children is mainly egocentric because the child does not know to whom he is speaking, nor whether he is being listened to. He talks either for himself or for the pleasure of associating anyone who happens to be there with the activity of the moment—"he does not attempt to place himself at the point of view of the hearer" (Piaget, 1948, p. 32). This occurs, Piaget believes, because:

> throughout the time when he is learning to speak the child is constantly the victim of a confusion between his own point of view and that of other people. (Piaget, 1948, p. 39)

Even at the age of 6½ years the egocentric language of Piaget's subjects amounted to "nearly half of their total spontaneous speech" (Piaget, 1948, p. 57).

Thus Piaget contrasts the child and the mature language user, maintaining that the adult, even in his most personal and private

occupation, thinks socially. He "has continually in his mind's eye his collaborators or opponents, actual or eventual" (Piaget, 1948, p. 59). The child, on the other hand, although he talks almost incessantly to his neighbours, rarely places himself at their point of view. He speaks to them for the most part as if he were thinking aloud. Piaget sums up:

> To put it quite simply, we may say that the adult thinks socially, even when he is alone, and that the child under seven thinks ego-centrically even in the society of others. (Piaget, 1948, p. 60)

To recapitulate, Werner and Kaplan, Vygotsky, and Piaget all visualize an early stage of language development where communication is egocentric and idiosyncratic. Mature language, on the other hand, is more elaborate and takes into account the listener's perspective. Moreover, according to Vygotsky and Werner and Kaplan, egocentric communications occur in maturity where the addressee is perceived as being psychologically "close." Details of the speech characteristics hypothesized by these theorists are contained in Table 1.

The next two theorists whose work is discussed are different from the preceding ones in so far as they are not psychologists and do not deal with language development per se. Moffett, an educator, suggests some effects that audience might have on language production while Bernstein, a sociolinguist, implies a differential ability to modify language as a function of audience, according to one's sociological background. Concluding the section is a discussion of the work of Joan Tough who also suggests that audience is an important variable in the communication situation and one which may differentiate

Table 1

Summary of Speech Characteristics Hypothesized by Werner and Kaplan, Vygotsky, Piaget and Bernstein

Werner and Kaplan Inner Speech	Laconicity, condensation. Multiple Meaning ("Hints")	Idiomatic Referents	Domination by (dynamically fluctuating) sense of words	Incompleteness (ellipses), redundancy, dystaxia, agglutinative or holophrastic organisation ("mnoremic" speech form etc.) Werner and Kaplan, 1967, p. 239
Vygotsky Inner Speech	External Speech which approximates to inner speech: "a simplified syntax, condensation, and a greatly reduced number of words characterize the tendency to predication which appears in external speech" between people who "live in close psychological contact." (p. 141) Vygotsky, 1962			
Piaget Egocentric Speech	- Lack of precision (p. 116) - Large proportion of cases in which the exemplar completely forgets to name the objects which he is explaining (p. 121)		- Inaccuracy of qualifying words (p. 119) - They assume that their hearer will understand from the outset what they are talking about (p. 121) Piaget, 1948	
Bernstein Restricted Code	Sentences shorter, grammatically simpler, unfinished, loose syntax, few subordinations. Meaning is implicit.	Collocations - idiom and cliche, socio-centric phrases. Shared Context Assumed	Adjectives and adverbs rigid and limited. Communicates attitude: often by phonological means (e.g. loudness) Wilkinson, 1971, pp. 136-137	

between children of different sociological background.

James Moffett

James Moffett not only recognises the importance of audience in a communication situation but he also believes that the curriculum should be built around a gradually increasing distance between addressor and subject and between addressor and addressee. These two distancing processes he calls "abstracting"—abstracting from the referent and abstracting for the subject—neither of which, he maintains, "exists apart from the other" (Moffett, 1968, p. 32).

According to Moffett (1968),

> one performs the same activities in pitching a subject to an audience as one does in extracting that subject from raw phenomena: one selects and reorganizes traits of things, digests, codes preferentially. (p. 31)

By "gradually pushing the persons apart" (or by a gradual process of "decentring") Moffett believes that we encourage the student to "play the symbolic scale," or in Hayakawa's terms, to move freely up and down the "abstraction ladder." For Moffett, the process is reflected in the student's movement through the four orders of discourse—drama (or description), narrative, exposition, logical argumentation—which may be represented by recording, reporting, generalizing and theorizing. He illustrates the whole progression by comparing an eye-witness account of what is happening before the guillotine, with an eye-witness account of what happened one day during the French Revolution, with an historical generalization about the Reign of Terror, with a political scientist's theory about revolutions starting right and moving left. Each level represents a

series of choices until we end with a "summary of summaries." The first level of discourse is the recording of an experience for one-self. Moffett says this is a "verbal stream," a quantity of detail from which later choices will be made. As the audience moves from self to friend, particular words are chosen, sentences constructed and parts organized in an appropriate manner. As the audience becomes more remote choices must again be made so that the communication becomes more explicit but, at the same time, more general, as details are replaced by larger categories. The process may continue as the audience becomes progressively distant, the subject becoming "less matter and more idea," until the "verbal stream" is displaced by the mere essence of the original incident.

In summary, Moffett (1968) hypothesizes that an increasing distance between addressor and addressee will have the following effects on a communication:

It will move,

1. from quantity of detail to essence (p. 35),
2. from the implicit, embodied idea to the explicitly formulated idea (p. 57),
3. from talking about present objects and actions to talking about things past and potential (p. 57),
4. from stereo-typing to originality, from groupism to individuality (p. 57).

Basil Bernstein

The current concern with so-called "disadvantaged" language is due in no small measure to the writings of Basil Bernstein whose work, nevertheless, has come under a great deal of criticism in recent

years. While agreeing with Bernstein, himself, that his work has, in many cases, been misinterpreted and misapplied (see Introduction to Bernstein, 1973, Vol. 2) one must also admit that his writings abound with ambiguities (Rosen, 1974).

Much of the criticism against Bernstein's work has arisen from the controversy regarding the role of linguistic structure in conveying meaning. Bernstein's theory places emphasis on the characteristic linguistic features of the speech typical of particular sections of the population, and these differences are seen as having an importance for a child's learning. That differences of this kind are important, however, has been challenged in recent years. Labov (1970), for example, has sought to show that American black youths who use non-standard English are nevertheless communicating at least as well as those from the middle class who do speak standard English.

The present study, however, is concerned with only one variable of the communication situation, namely the audience, and when Bernstein's theory is considered in terms of Werner and Kaplan's distancing hypothesis, it seems apparent that implicit in Bernstein's writing is the suggestion that restricted code users do not modify their language as a function of audience. If this is the case then the restricted code may be considered not so much restricted in its linguistic characteristics, but rather, restricted in terms of the audience for whom it is appropriate.

Bernstein calls his work sociolinguistic in nature and attempts to link social structure and social discourse. (He acknowledges his debt to both Durkheim and Marx.) Basically, Bernstein maintains that

people who are restricted to a particular type of social relationship will also be restricted to a particular form of speech (Gahagan & Gahagan, 1970). Members of an authority-oriented family (roughly synonymous with British lower working-class family "type") will be more likely to speak in a "restricted code" than members of a person-oriented family (roughly synonymous with British middle-class family "type") who will have access to what Bernstein calls an "elaborated code" (De Cecco & Crawford, 1974).

Although there is not one direct reference in his work to the aforementioned distancing hypothesis, one may find many passages which afford excellent comparison with the theory of Werner and Kaplan.

A major thrust of Werner and Kaplan's theory is that speech form is dependent on the psychological distance perceived between addressor and addressee. Bernstein, too, appears to recognize the import of inter-personal relations for speech form, and says:

> Changes in the form of certain social relations . . . act selectively upon the principles controlling the selection of both syntactic and lexical options. (Bernstein, 1971, p. 124)

According to Werner and Kaplan speech approximates to "inner speech" when a mature language user is addressing a psychologically "near" audience. Bernstein hypothesizes similar conditions giving rise to what he calls a "restricted code." Bernstein (1971, p. 176) quotes Sapir, Malinowski, Firth, Vygotsky and Luria as all having pointed out from different points of view that the closer the identifications of speakers, the more likely it is that the speech will take a specific form, one in which the range of syntactic alternatives

will be reduced and the lexis will be drawn from a narrow range. Thus Bernstein says,

> A restricted code emerges where the culture or sub-culture raises the "we" above "I." (1971, p. 146)

As already mentioned above (see p. 14), development for Werner and Kaplan is primarily a movement towards individualisation so that the mature language user is a "differentiated I." Again we may compare the conditions which give rise to Bernstein's "elaborated code."

> An elaborated code will arise whenever the culture or sub-culture emphasizes the "I" over the "we." (1971, p. 147)

Furthermore, Bernstein goes on to say that,

> An elaborated code, in principle, presupposes a sharp boundary or gap between self and others which is crossed through the creation of speech which specifically fits a differentiated "other." (1971, p. 152)

The characteristics of the two speech codes also bear similarities to Werner and Kaplan's inner and external speech. In fact, as may be seen from Table 1, Bernstein's restricted code, Piaget's egocentric speech, Vygotsky's inner speech and Werner and Kaplan's inner speech all have similar characteristics. Moreover, like these psychologists, Bernstein acknowledges the fact that:

> a restricted code may be entirely appropriate for certain contexts. (1971, p. 147)

However, whereas the elaborated code user switches codes according to the demands of the situation, the restricted code user, according to Bernstein, does not.

Thus one is faced with the implication that a certain section

of the population (which has a particular sociological background in common) does not modify its language as a function of audience.

Joan Tough

The final work to be discussed in this section is that of Joan Tough. Two aspects of Tough's work are seen by the investigator as having relevance for the present study.

Firstly, Tough emphasizes the role of situational variables in language production. She says:

> We cannot make statements about children's use of language that hold for any and every situation. We must look at the kinds of demands that are being made in different contexts . . . (Tough, 1977, p. 160)

The findings of Tough's longitudinal study show that although the children in her disadvantaged group scored less on measures of linguistic structure overall than those in her advantaged group, in certain situations the scoring pattern was reversed. Tough blames this on a general lack of audience awareness on the part of the disadvantaged group as they often failed to

> recognize that there was essential information to be given if the listener was to understand the ideas being offered. (Tough, 1977, p. 169)

However, one testing situation seems to illustrate well the implications of Werner and Kaplan's distancing hypothesis. A screen was placed between two children and one child gave instructions to the other to construct a specific picture, using vinyl shapes. Tough found that

> After the disadvantaged children had had two demonstrations of what is required, their use of nouns and modification and of locational prepositions increases dramatically when compared

> with their use in other situations, and the average score for the noun phrases they use is now higher than that of the advantaged group. (Tough, 1973, p. 13)

She concludes that the screen has made elaboration necessary in a situation which would otherwise not require it. In terms of the distancing hypothesis, the child has been forced to perceive the "distance" which exists between himself and his audience.

A second aspect of Tough's work (although as yet incomplete) which is of relevance to the present study is her approach to the analysis of child language. She has set out to analyze the way in which children use their language and to discover whether any differences occur between children of different socio-economic background. Tough identifies four functions of language (the directive, the interpretative, the projective and the relational) within which various uses of language are distinguishable. She says:

> If the functions of language are concerned with different kinds of meaning or thinking, the means by which this will be made evident is through different uses of language. (Tough, 1977, p. 46)

Furthermore, within each use of language certain strategies may be discerned. These take account of different devices that may be used such as aiding explicitness within a reporting use of language.

A further analysis of all of Tough's functions is beyond the scope of the present study but her so-called "relational function" seems pertinent.

Tough (1977, p. 64) maintains that the strategies a child selects to express relationships as he talks with another are likely

to influence the kind of interaction which will emerge. This she refers to as the relational function of language which, she believes, is realised through two uses of language, the self maintaining and the interactional. Unfortunately, although strategies at work within the former have been identified, work on the interactional strategies (which would be of most relevance to a study of the present kind) is as yet incomplete.

Summary of Section I

The theories of Moffett, Vygotsky, Piaget, and Werner and Kaplan, which are discussed above suggest that as an audience is perceived as being more "remote" communication should show concomitant movement along the following continua:

implicit-explicit (Piaget, Vygotsky, Moffett, Bernstein, Werner and Kaplan)

specific-general
quantity-essence } (Moffett)

The implication of such theory is that by offering a child audiences at a varying "distance" from himself, we are encouraging that child to develop his language potential.

The work of Tough and Bernstein, however, suggests that this ability to modify language as a function of audience may be a factor of socio-economic status.

SECTION II: A REVIEW OF STUDIES OF THE EFFECT OF AUDIENCE ON LANGUAGE PRODUCTION

Studies of Egocentrism (or Decentring)

Although very little research can be found which investigates the effect of audience on the language of middle-school children, the relation between communication and the young child's cognitive egocentrism (or lack of the ability to place oneself in the perspective of a listener) has been a subject of investigation for almost 50 years. This interest has stemmed, for the main part, from the work of Piaget who, in 1926, suggested that the communicative language of the young child is inadequate because the child lacks an awareness that other people have different points of view from himself. (See Section I.) He suggests that it is only at the stage of Formal Operations that a child appreciates the nature of his audience. However, the myths which Piaget's subjects were asked to re-tell in his experiment have since been considered rather difficult for young children and the task of describing the mechanism of a water syringe is now thought by some to be so cognitively complex for the child that his entire attention would need to be devoted to the task rather than being free to possibly take into account his listener's viewpoint (Maratsos, 1973).

More recently, more appropriate tasks have been given to young children and although no results dispute the existence of egocentric language, some do suggest that even pre-schoolers may attempt to modify their language as a function of listener.

Maratsos (1971), for example, investigated whether or not

pre-school children correctly used the definite or indefinite article, according to their listener's point of view. His data seem to indicate that many 4 year olds (especially girls) do. While the 3 year olds in his study were less accurate, even they demonstrated some competence.

In a second study, Maratsos (1973) had 3 to 4 year old children specify referents (toys to use) to an adult in a game they were playing. He found that the children were far more explicit verbally when communicating to an apparently blind adult than when communicating with an adult who could see. Furthermore, many of the children simply pointed to particular referents when the adult could see, yet pointing was seldom used by the children talking to an adult who had blocked vision. The children seemed to be clearly communicating differently depending upon the role-attributes of the listener.

Peterson (1975) also demonstrated that pre-school children are able to modify their verbal communication as a function of listener attributes. Her subjects talked about an experience which had occurred one week previously, under two conditions of listener knowledge:

a. when the listener was knowledgeable about those experiences (having participated in them) and,

b. when the listener was naive.

Peterson found that the proportion of new elements that were appropriately introduced was substantially higher when the experimenter was naive rather than knowledgeable. Also, the children volunteered significantly more references when the listener was naive than when

he was knowledgeable.

In a slightly different type of study, Shatz and Gelman (1973) investigated the modifications which 4 year olds made in their language when talking to 2 year olds as compared with 4 year olds and adults. Three studies (A, B and C) were carried out with a group of 4 year old subjects. In Study A the subjects talked to both an adult and a 2 year old about a toy. Shatz and Gelman (1973) say:

> The use of specific toys, instructions, and a fixed setting served to control for the topic of conversation in this study. (p. 2)

In Study B the subjects talked spontaneously to an adult and to a 2 year old, while in Study C the subjects talked spontaneously to adults and to peers.

It was found that the 4 year olds simplified their grammar, shortened their utterances and radically changed their attention-getting appeals when talking to 2 year olds as compared with 4 year olds and adults. Thus there was substantial modification depending upon the age of the listener.

It should be noted, however, that Shatz and Gelman did conclude that adult-directed speech closely resembled speech addressed to peers and hence, as Peterson (1975) points out, their results may

> be due to the 4 year olds imitating the language of the 2 year olds rather than to appropriate modification dependent on the characteristics of the listener. (p. 12)

Although studies of egocentrism are, by and large, concerned with children of pre-school age, a few investigators have taken a developmental approach.

Flavell, Botkin, Wright and Jarvis (1968), for example,

developed a range of tasks which were intended to tap role-taking and communicative abilities of children in grades two through eight and grade eleven. Two tasks which are considered more relevant than the others to the present study are discussed below. Similar results are recorded on all the tasks.

The first task was similar to that used by Maratsos (1973) in that the subjects were asked to communicate the rules of a game to two different listeners—one blindfolded and one "sighted." It was hypothesized that there would be a greater difference between the two messages with age. Messages were scored according to:

a. the number of different words used by a subject in his message

b. the amount of game information given

c. the amount of inadequate information, the frame of reference being the listener's inferred level of comprehension.

Although the "inadequate information" measure did not turn up as a statistically significant variable, Flavell et al. maintain that the results for the 'game information' alone could "carry" their prediction. They say that their results:

> plainly show that the two messages were more different in the older groups and more different in a way which is eminently sensible. (p. 95)

In a second task, subjects (all female this time) were asked to re-tell a story which they were given to read (or had read to them, in the case of younger students). Firstly they re-told the story to a photograph of an adult and secondly to a photograph of a 4 year old boy. The hypothesis, as in the previous case, was that younger subjects

would be less prone to make allowances for the age of their audience than would older subjects. The second message of each subject was scored for the number of "Simplifying Recodings" which it contained. The results showed a striking increase in recoding activity generally between third and seventh grade, with no apparent change thereafter. However, just how "real" an inanimate audience appeared to the subjects does not seem to have been taken into account by the researchers, neither has the possible effect on the results of all the subjects speaking to the "adult" prior to the child.

As mentioned above, Flavell et al. obtained similar results on a whole range of tasks which included persuasive communications and communications addressed to a large audience. They conclude:

> The data from these studies abundantly document the generalization that profound and widespread changes in role taking and communication skills take place during [middle childhood and adolescence]. (Flavell et al., 1968, p. 212)

Krauss and Glucksberg (1977) approached the relation between egocentrism and communication using a different perspective and different methodology. Instead of looking at how the child modifies his communication as a function of the characteristics of the listener, these investigators assessed the role of egocentrism in a referential communication task. The ages of the subjects ranged from nursery school children through grade nine pupils. The subjects were paired and sat one on each side of a screen. Before each subject was a set of blocks, each with an unusual design on it. The task was for each subject to communicate to his partner the order in which to stack the blocks. Krauss and Glucksberg were surprised to find that even fifth

graders were no better than kindergartners on the first trial, not completing a single errorless run. In the course of 15 subsequent trials, third graders did not improve at all, fifth and seventh graders only very slightly, but ninth graders showed a drastic improvement. Krauss and Glucksberg report that their fifth graders were "about 10 years old" (p. 103) and therefore of a similar age to the subjects in the present study. The researchers do note, however, that their subjects may have been "so overwhelmed by the demands of the particular situation" that they may not have brought their communicative ability into play (Krauss & Glucksberg, 1977, p. 105).

A second finding of Krauss and Glucksberg is also of interest. A similar task was given to adults who made virtually no error even on their first try. However, although the original descriptive phrase given by the subjects was an effective reference, on subsequent trials these messages became significantly shorter.

For example:

Initial Description: It looks like two worms or snakes looking at each other. The bottom part looks like the rocker from a rocking chair.

Shorter Version: Two worms looking at each other.

Shortest Version: Two worms.

Although this might be considered a practice effect, it is more likely that the messages become more implicit because the addressor and addressee shared the context of the previous trials. Within the test situation the partners had become psychologically "close."

A study conducted by Feffer and Suchotliff (1966) demonstrates that an ability to "decentre" affects the communicative accuracy of college students as well as pre-schoolers.

The subjects (all college students) were required to communicate a concept to their partners by using one-word clues. The dependent measure was the amount of time used for correct identification of the concept by the addressee as well as the number of clues which were required by the addressee for a correct identification. The findings of the study indicated that communicator-addressee pairs who scored high on a decentring task were faster and required fewer clues to attain correct communication of the concepts than communicator-addressee pairs who scored low on the same decentring task.

Sociolinguistic Studies

Sociolinguistic studies, in general, study "the pattern of social relationships which are the base of speech types" (Bain, lecture University of Alberta, 1976). Thus, audience is identified by many sociolinguistic theorists as a vital component of any speech situation (Ervin-Tripp, 1968; Fishman, 1971; Hymes, 1972). On the whole, however, studies examine role relationships in different cultures or sub-cultures and focus on such aspects as code switching in bilingual and diglossic situations, or on the use of honorifics (Fishman, 1971; Pride & Holmes, 1972). In the opinion of the investigator these studies measure simultaneously the effect of several components of the communication situation rather than focussing solely on the effect of audience. Even in Labov's studies of variations in specific phonemic characteristics such as "ing" and "th," the whole

of the experimental context moves along the informal-formal continuum, rather than there being merely a change of addressee.

However, Cazden, in a book of readings entitled "Sociolinguistics" (Pride & Holmes, 1972), does point to the importance of the speech situation as an independent variable, particularly when comparing the language of members of a different social class. Her paper, however, surveys research on child language which includes aspects of the speech situation as independent variables, regardless of social class. The research is grouped under the various components of the speech situation. Unfortunately, that which is reported under the component of "listener" is mainly unpublished term papers, the results of which, perhaps, cannot be accepted at their face value. These results, however, do appear to be in agreement with findings of some recent studies of egocentrism.

Cazden (1967) found that her subjects spoke their shortest sentences, on the average, in two experimental situations with peers. Sentence length was also measured by two students at Harvard University who found that children modified their language when speaking to younger children. Yurchak (1969) found that her 3 year old daughter spoke her longest utterances to her mother, her shortest utterances to her sister, while speech to herself was somewhere in between. Bernat (1969) found that three girls of 9, 11 and 13 years adapted the length of their utterances to younger boys (ages 13, 30 and 29 months), according to evidence of the boys' capacity to talk and to understand.

Studies Based on the Distancing Hypothesis

Only one experiment has been found which deliberately attempts to study the effects of a "distanced" audience. Kaplan (Werner & Kaplan, 1963) attempted to assess the communicative consequences of speech for oneself as opposed to speech for an external audience. Kaplan's subjects were college students and they were presented with a series of stimuli and instructed to write two descriptions of each: one description was solely for the subject's benefit, that is, to help him recognise the stimulus later; the other description was intended to help his "audience" identify it. It was found that descriptions for the audience tended to be longer than those for self, and contained more adjectives and other qualifiers (see Table 1, p. 18). Kaplan found that the differences between external and internal speech were heightened when the stimulus was "perceptually articulate versus diffuse," for example, abstract line drawings as contrasted with water blots. Although only concerned with adults, Kaplan did hypothesize that children would show considerably less differentiation between the two message types than did her adult subjects.

Summary of Section II

Douglas Barnes (1973) says that it is,

> hard to say at what age children learn to match what they say to the person they say it to. (p. 18)

However, the results of the work cited above show that even children of pre-school age can (and do) modify their language as a function of listener attributes. According to Flavell et al. (1968)

messages coded for different audiences will show increasing differentiation by grade four. Although Krauss and Glucksberg (1977) cast some doubt on this finding, they do point to the possible limitations of their study.

Although the subjects of the studies cited above are not middle-elementary school children, the results imply that the language responses of pre-schoolers (Maratsos, 1971, 1973; Peterson, 1975; Shatz & Gelman, 1973) through to adults (Kaplan, 1967; Krauss & Glucksberg, 1977) will reflect a movement along an implicit-explicit dimension, according to differing listener attributes. Degree of differentiation in responses, however, should increase with age (Flavell et al., 1968; Kaplan, 1967).

REVIEW OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has discussed the theories which have influenced the investigator and studies which have sought to investigate the effect of audience on language production.

The theories stated in Section I postulate an immature stage of language development which lacks all awareness of audience, as opposed to a more mature stage where communication is made more exact and elaborate in order to bridge the gulf which exists between addressor and addressee. Even in maturity, however, when an audience is viewed as psychologically close, it is quite appropriate to use a form of language in which the characteristics of less mature language are reflected. According to Bernstein and Tough, however, people of a certain sociological background do not, under general circumstances,

perceive the need to make their language elaborate enough to reach a distant audience.

The ability to bridge this "language gap" is seen by Moffett as being so critical that he suggests the language arts curriculum should be built around an audience continuum, ranging from self to generalized other. In this way pupils would learn to "play the symbolic scale," come to an appreciation of the nature of their audience and hence learn to communicate effectively. The implication is, therefore, that by offering the child audiences at increasing distance from self we are encouraging that child to develop his language potential.

Research to date, however, has tended to concentrate on Piaget's notion of egocentrism and has usually "artificially" distanced the audience by means of a screen or blindfold. Moreover, no research can be found which compares the performance of different socio-economic groups when speaking to different audiences. Thus, it was the purpose of the present study to investigate any changes which take place in the language of middle elementary school children as a function of an increasingly remote audience, and, moreover, to investigate whether any differences in these "changes" may be discerned between children of differing sociological background.

Chapter 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The design of the study is reported in this chapter. It includes a discussion of the student sampling procedures, the research instrument, the data collection procedure, the analytic procedures, the reliability of the analysis and the pilot study.

SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

Seventy five grade four girls of four elementary schools within the Edmonton Public School system comprised the population for the study. These schools were selected by administrative personnel of the Public School Board, who identified two of the schools as representative of high socio-economic status and two of them as representative of low socio-economic status.

The population comprised only girls in order to eliminate any discrepancies of language ability due to the variable of sex and also in order to facilitate testing procedures.

The sample comprised two groups of 15 each. One group was selected from the total population of 35 girls in the high socio-economic population and the other was selected from the total population of 40 girls in the low socio-economic population.

These samples were chosen according to data collected from the cumulative record cards, in order to meet the following criteria:

a. Subjects within the verbal IQ band 101-120 were chosen in

an attempt to limit the sample to subjects of average intellectual ability. The Canadian Test of Cognitive Abilities had been administered to both groups in May 1976. However, a t-test subsequently performed on the mean IQ of the two groups does show a significant difference ($p = .03$), in favour of the high socio-economic status group.

b. In order to maintain a certain degree of age consistency only subjects within the age range of 9 years 6 months to 10 years 2 months were chosen. This eliminated any children who were repeating the grade.

c. Subjects for whom English was a second language were excluded since the oral language task may have presented them with some difficulty.

Six other students were eliminated from the sample, two from the high socio-economic group and four from the low socio-economic group. The four students in the low socio-economic group were eliminated as they were absent from school during the time when the language protocols were collected. One of the subjects in the high socio-economic group was eliminated from the sample because of recording problems and another was withdrawn from the study by her parents.

INSTRUMENTATION

The research instrument consisted of three oral language tasks. The subjects were asked to talk about a "scary experience" to three different audiences, namely—peer, older child, unfamiliar adult. The subject of the oral language task, namely that each child talk about a "scary experience," was chosen in light of both the results

Table 2

IQ and Age Distribution of Low SES Sample

Subject	Age		IQ
	Years	Months	
L_1	10	0	102
L_2	9	10	109
L_3	10	1	104
L_4	9	10	103
L_5	9	10	108
L_6	10	0	106
L_7	9	9	109
L_8	9	9	104
L_9	9	11	103
L_{10}	10	1	111
L_{11}	9	10	102
L_{12}	9	7	110
L_{13}	10	0	103
L_{14}	9	11	117
L_{15}	10	2	120

Table 3

IQ and Age Distribution of High SES Sample

Subject	Age		IQ
	Years	Months	
H_1	9	9	113
H_2	10	2	113
H_3	9	7	101
H_4	9	8	120
H_5	9	8	114
H_6	10	2	109
H_7	10	2	113
H_8	9	7	120
H_9	9	6	106
H_{10}	10	1	118
H_{11}	9	7	109
H_{12}	9	11	119
H_{13}	9	8	120
H_{14}	10	1	109
H_{15}	9	8	101

of the first pilot study and Loban's findings that the aforementioned topic elicited a flow of personal language (Loban, 1970). The subjects' responses were taped and transcribed by the investigator. Running observations of the subject's non-verbal behaviour were also made by the investigator.

THE AUDIENCES

In the experimental situation, the topic and setting remain constant throughout; the audience, being the variable under study, is the only component of the communication situation which changes.

The peer audience consisted of one of two girls from the same class as the subjects. These girls were chosen on the basis of their teachers' judgement, and were judged to be "friendly, warm and potentially good, interested listeners."

The grade six audience consisted of one of two girls from the grade six class in the same school as the subjects. They were chosen on the same basis and satisfied the same criteria as the peer audience.

The adult audience was represented by one of two ex-teachers who were both female and of approximately the same age. They were chosen by the investigator and satisfied the same criteria as both the peer and grade six audiences.

In an attempt to eliminate audience fatigue the two representatives of each audience-type were alternately involved in the testing situation, as subjects met the audience on a one-to-one basis.

Audiences were instructed during a group training session to

open each interview with the question "Hi! What scary thing are you going to tell me about?" During the same session the potential audiences practiced acting as a "warm, interested" audience, making any verbal or non-verbal responses which were natural to them but refraining from asking any question of the subjects, other than the introductory one.

TESTING PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY

Data collection began on May 2, 1977, and continued for two weeks. The procedure with each of the thirty subjects was as follows.

Prior to the subjects meeting with any of the audiences, the investigator conducted an introductory interview with each member of the sample. The primary purpose of this interview was to familiarize the subject with (a) the nature of the forthcoming task and (b) the presence of the tape recorder.

A secondary purpose was that the investigator should act as a "critical listener" (yet warm and attentive) who would "engage the child in thinking aloud" (Tough, 1977, p. 176). This, it was hoped, would later free the subjects to concentrate on the appropriateness of their language.

Each introductory interview was conducted within the following framework:

a. An introductory comment giving the purpose of the forthcoming task, and reassurance that the subject is not to be "tested."

b. An explanation that the subject is going to talk about the same thing to three different people: "I'm going to ask you to

talk to three different people—a friend from your own class, a girl from grade six and a lady that you don't know. You're going to talk to these people one at a time and you're going to talk about the same thing to each of them. The thing you're going to talk about is something scary that has happened to you."

c. A statement to begin the subject's response to the investigator: "You're going to tell these three people about something scary that's happened to you. Can you think of anything?—Tell me about it."

d. Additional questions for more reticient respondents: "Have you ever been scared—in the dark?

—when someone has played a trick on you?

—by any animals?

—in a dream?

—when reading a book or watching a movie?"

e. The following questions designed to help the child recall the earlier experience:

—"When did this happen?"

—"How did you feel when you were scared?"

—"What were you thinking while this was happening?"

f. A statement telling the subject which audience she is to speak to.

g. The subject is given a few minutes for thought and is asked if she is ready before the audience is introduced.

The subjects spoke to the three audiences in a randomized order (see Table 4). Procedures (f) and (g) above were repeated prior to the

Table 4

Randomized Sequence of Audience Given to Each Subject

Subjects		Audiences
Low SES	High SES	
L_1	H_1	1 - 2 - 3
L_2	H_2	1 - 3 - 2
L_3	H_3	2 - 3 - 1
L_4	H_4	2 - 1 - 3
L_5	L_5	3 - 2 - 1
L_6	H_6	3 - 1 - 2
L_7	H_7	1 - 2 - 3
L_8	H_8	1 - 3 - 2
L_9	H_9	2 - 3 - 1
L_{10}	H_{10}	2 - 1 - 3
L_{11}	H_{11}	3 - 2 - 1
L_{12}	H_{12}	3 - 1 - 2
L_{13}	H_{13}	1 - 2 - 3
L_{14}	H_{14}	2 - 3 - 1
L_{15}	H_{15}	3 - 2 - 1

Key: 1 - peer
2 - grade six
3 - adult

subjects meeting each audience.

The setting of the interview (which was either the Vice-Principal's office or the Counsellor's room, in each school) was made as informal as possible by placing the two chairs close to one another rather than one on each side of a table. The cassette tape recorder used had a built-in microphone and was therefore relatively unobtrusive.

TREATMENT OF THE DATA

General Questions

The following questions provide the focus for the study:

> In what ways, if any, do middle elementary school children modify their language as a function of an increasingly remote audience?
>
> Can differences be discerned in the modifications made (as a function of audience) in the oral language of middle elementary school children of different socio-economic backgrounds?

These questions were further refined to form the following specific research questions:

Question One

> Does audience have a significant effect on the oral language responses of the subjects as witnessed in
>
> (a) the following syntactic measures:
>
> clause usage
> pronoun usage
> maze usage
>
> (b) the duration of the response?

Question Two

Does audience have a differential effect on the language produced by subjects of high and low socio-economic status, as witnessed in the above measures?

Question Three

What categories of change (if any) occur in the subjects' oral language to accommodate for an increasingly remote audience?

Question Four

Do differences exist between the high and low socio-economic groups in the kinds of changes which are made as a function of audience?

Analysis

In order to address questions 1 and 2 of the research questions, a statistical analysis of scores on syntactic measures was performed.

A second form of analysis, namely a descriptive one, was employed to investigate the remaining research questions.

Statistical Analysis

This form of analysis was limited to the investigation of change at the syntactic level. Syntactic analysis was limited to those features which either have been shown, by other investigations, to reflect language complexity, or which may be considered to play an important part in audience understanding.

Use of clauses. The degree of subordination exhibited in the subjects' language protocols was chosen for study on the basis of Loban's suggestion (Loban, 1970) that amount of subordination is a

measure of language maturity. Bernstein, too, has used this measure for analysis and maintains that a restricted code contains less subordination than an elaborated one.

In the present study three types of clauses, main, subordinate and incomplete, were counted and each expressed as a percentage of all clauses used.

Pronoun usage. The use of anaphoric pronouns (those which refer to an antecedent) rather than exophoric pronouns (whose referent is unclear) is vital to the understanding of a "distant" audience. Thus, in the present study, each subject's anaphoric pronouns were counted and expressed as a percentage of total pronouns used.

Maze usage. Maze usage was chosen for investigation on the basis of Anderson's findings (Anderson, 1973) that not only is maze usage a prominent feature in the oral language of children of this age but also that the use of edit mazes correlates with language complexity.

Each language protocol was studied for the total number of mazes used and the number of edit mazes (i.e. word tangles resulting from a correction or change of direction) employed by each subject was then expressed as a percentage of this total.

Duration of the conversation. The length of each conversation was recorded in seconds as the results of Cazden, 1967, Yurchak, 1969 and Bernat, 1969, suggest that this measure might be affected by audience.

In order to investigate the relevant research questions, the data from the above measures were subjected to two-way analyses of variance with repeated measures on Factor B. Factor A was

socio-economic status (i.e., group membership) and Factor B was audience.

Descriptive Analysis

The investigation of the ways in which the subjects modified their language as a function of audience was carried out by means of a descriptive analysis, the aim of which was to formulate categories from any changes which took place. The categorization was executed by first making intra-subject comparisons of the language protocols. Any changes which occurred between the response to one audience and to another were noted. The changes recorded for the whole group were then studied in detail and the following categories of change were formulated:

1. change in the information units given
2. change in the degree of explicitness of an idea
3. change in the quality of the expression of an idea
4. change in the mood of the verb
5. change in the degree of generality of an idea.

These categories are defined and discussed in Chapter 4.

Due to the great discrepancies in the length of the subjects' conversations, an inter-subject comparison based on a direct count of changes was impossible. Hence, an "inverse frequency of change" was calculated whereby the "density" of the subjects' language changes, across audience, could be compared. This computation was calculated by dividing the average length of conversation by the number of changes made:

$$\frac{\text{Mean Length in Seconds}}{\text{Number of Changes Made}}$$

In effect, this computation spaces a subjects' changes regularly through her conversation and hence makes possible a direct comparison between subjects.

RELIABILITY OF THE CATEGORIES FOR SCORING THE RESPONSES

To determine the reliability with which other researchers could apply the categories defined by the present investigator, two independent judges (after a familiarization session with the investigator) each scored a random sample of 10% of the protocols.

Inter-scorer agreements between the investigator and the two judges were calculated on the basis of the Arrington formula (Arrington, 1932):

$$\frac{2 \times \text{agreements}}{2 \times \text{agreements} + \text{disagreements}}$$

The average agreement of 95.3% indicates a satisfactory reliability of categorical scoring.

One hundred percent agreement was obtained between the judges and the investigator for the syntactic analysis.

PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted in April 1977 at Thorncliffe Elementary School, Edmonton. Its purpose was three-fold:

a. to test the suitability of the task for eliciting oral language

b. to test the effectiveness of the audience training procedure

c. to allow for trial administration of the research instrument.

Six grade four girls of "average" language facility were chosen to act as subjects on the basis of their teacher's judgement. Two grade four girls and two grade six girls were also chosen on the basis of their teacher's judgement to act as a "warm, interested audience." One adult, an ex-teacher, who was not involved in the later study, acted as the unfamiliar adult in the pilot study.

The proposed task at that time was to ask each subject what she liked to do for fun. However, the responses received tended to be lists of likes and dislikes rather than specimens of fluent language. In a group discussion which was held immediately after the pilot study, the children involved expressed the opinion that the task was very difficult. The task described earlier in the chapter, namely to tell about a scary experience, was then administered to three other grade four girls at Thorncliffe during the following week and was found to be satisfactory.

The audience training procedure was found to be effective and the method for taping the sessions adequate. The tapes were clear enough for ease of transcription and the presence of the recorder did not appear to produce undue anxiety in the subjects. Neither did the investigator's presence appear to adversely affect the interaction between subject and audience.

SUMMARY

Chapter 3 described the design of the study. The research questions were formulated and the chosen syntactic measures discussed. The two forms of analysis chosen to investigate the questions were also identified.

Chapter 4

THE FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the two forms of analysis which were described in the preceding chapter. These findings are synthesized in the concluding summary according to the general questions addressed by the study.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

To investigate whether audience had a significant effect on the subjects' use of the chosen syntactic measures and whether audience had a different effect on the two groups, the data were subjected to two-way analyses of variance, with repeated measures on Factor B. "A main effect" was socio-economic status and "B main effect" was audience. This section presents the findings of the analyses.

Clause Usage

As may be seen from Table 5, there appears to be a significant interaction effect between socio-economic status and audience, regarding the proportion of main clauses used ($p = .03$). The cell means for the two groups on this measure have been plotted in Figure 2 which illustrates that while the performance of the two groups is very similar with the grade six audience, there appears to

Table 5

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (SES, Audience)
of Mean Number of Main Clauses

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Subjects	8091.875	29			
'A' Main Effects	551.250	1	551.250	2.047	1.1636
Subjects within Groups	7540.875	38	269.317		
Within Subjects	3894.438	60			
'B' Main Effects	127.383	2	63.691	1.064	0.3518
'A x B' Interaction	416.250	2	208.125	3.478	0.0377*
'B' x Subj. within Groups	3350.875	56	59.837		

* Significant at .03 level.

Note: Factor A - SES
Factor B - Audience

Figure 2

Graphic Representation of the Mean Scores of Main Clauses

be a marked difference between the two groups on the use of main clauses with the adult audience. Whereas the results of the high socio-economic group show a slight decrease in the use of main clauses as the audience becomes remote, the results of the low socio-economic group, on the other hand, show a slight decrease between the peer and grade six audiences but show an increase of 7.45% between the grade six and the adult audiences. If a larger proportion of main clauses, as the literature suggests, may be taken as a measure of less complex language, then it would appear that, unlike the high group, the low socio-economic group use their most complex language with the grade six audience and their simplest with the unfamiliar adult.

The Use of Pronouns

As may be seen from Table 6 the two-way analysis of variance revealed no significant effect in the use of anaphoric pronouns.

Some support for further investigation of this measure, however, is given, in so far as the performance of the two groups (see Figure 3) is again most similar with the grade six audience (a difference of 3.24%) and least similar with the unfamiliar adult audience (a difference of 11.21%). It appears that there was a tendency for the high socio-economic group to use their most explicit pronouns with the adult, while the low socio-economic group tended to use theirs with the grade six audience.

Table 6

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (SES, Audience)
of Use of Anaphoric Pronouns

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Subjects	40317.063	29			
'A' Main Effects	2149.863	1	2149.863	1.577	0.2195
Subjects within Groups	38167.063	28	1363.109		
Within Subjects	24267.375	60			
'B' Main Effects	1603.945	2	801.973	2.120	0.1295
'A x B' Interaction	1482.480	2	741.240	1.960	0.1504
'B' x Subj. within Groups	21181.125	56	378.234		

Note: Factor A - SES
Factor B - Audience

Figure 3

Graphic Representation of the Mean Scores of Anaphoric Pronouns

The Use of Mazes

As may be seen from Table 7, the two-way analysis of variance revealed no significant interaction effect in the use of edit mazes.

Duration of Response

It would appear from the results shown in Table 8 that audience has no significant effect on the length of the subjects' conversations. Neither does there appear to be any interaction effect. There is, however, a significant difference between the performance of the two groups on this measure ($p = .01$). This would appear to agree with Tough's finding (Tough, 1977) that her low socio-economic subjects gave shorter answers than her high socio-economic subjects, unless prompted.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

In attempting to describe the apparent disagreement between certain researchers as to whether young children modify their language as a function of listener, Peterson suggests that the different conclusions may be attributable to a difference of focus. She says:

> In the present study, an investigator looking simply at the children's verbalizations . . . would have ample support for claiming that the children were making a lot of egocentric mistakes. On the other hand, by looking at how their verbal productions differed relative to different listener needs, it is clear that appropriate tailoring of their communication occurs. (Peterson, 1975, p. 1018)

A similar suggestion may be made concerning the data of the present study. It is certainly true that a large part of the subjects' responses exhibit no change as a function of audience. However, it

Table 7

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (SES, Audience)
of Use of Edit Mazes

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Subjects	49120.375	29			
'A' Main Effects	1101.973	1	1101.973	0.643	0.4295
Subjects within Groups	48018.750	28	1714.955		
Within Subjects	65093.375	60			
'B' Main Effects	1731.914	2	865.957	0.787	0.4600
'A x B' Interaction	1774.688	2	887.344	0.807	0.4514
'B' x Subj. within Groups	61586.688	56	1099.762		

Note: Factor A - SES
Factor B - Audience

Figure 4

Graphic Representation of the Mean Scores of Edit Mazes

Table 8

Two-Way Analysis of Variance (SES, Audience)
of Mean Duration of Responses

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Subjects	316177.000	29			
'A' Main Effects	65448.281	1	65448.281	7.309	0.0115**
Subjects within Groups	250729.000	28	8954.605		
Within Subjects	36187.375	60			
'B' Main Effects	937.207	2	468.604	0.746	0.4790
'A x B' Interaction	64.043	2	32.021	0.051	0.9504
'B' x Subj. within Groups	35186.938	56	628.338		

** Significant at the .01 level.

Note: Factor A - SES
Factor B - Audience

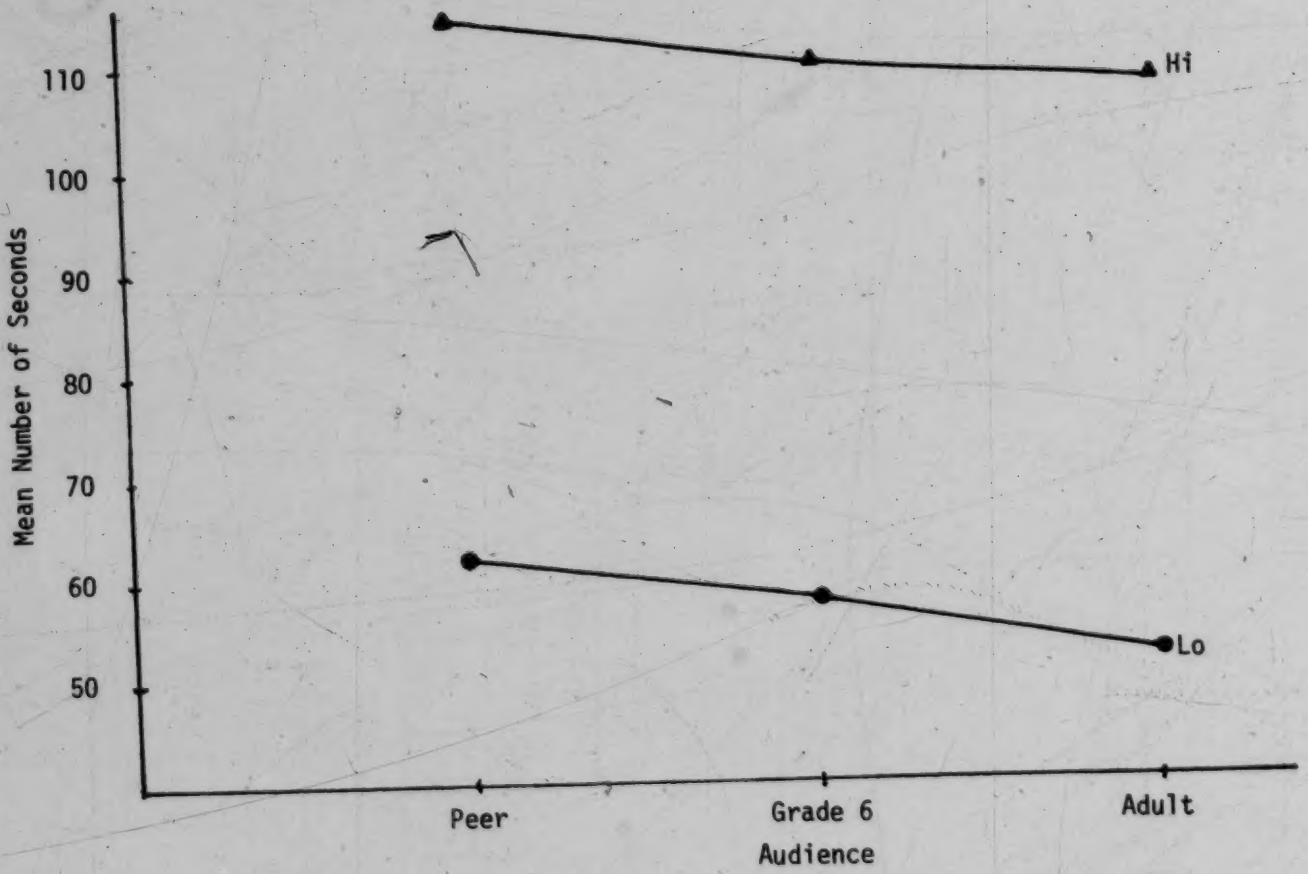

Figure 5

Graphic Representation of the Mean Durations of Conversations

is also true that by making intra-subject comparisons many differences are evident in the way in which the subjects respond to the different audiences. This section describes the categories of change which emerged from an analysis of this sort for the whole group.

As noted in Chapter 3, the responses of each subject were compared in order to identify any change which occurred across audience. On examination of these changes for the whole group (30 subjects) it appeared that the following types of change were taking place:

1. Change in the information units given.
2. Change in the degree of explicitness of an idea.
3. Change in the quality of the expression of an idea.
4. Change in the degree of generality of an idea.
5. Change in the mood of the verb.

1. Change in the Information Given

A change was "scored" within this category whenever a unit of information was added or omitted by a subject for only one audience out of the three. Unlike the other categories, this category is not concerned with the changes which take place in the expression of one idea across three audiences, but rather, whether the same ideas are expressed to each audience.

For both groups, the highest concentration of changes occurs within this category. The responses of the low socio-economic group, however, cluster here more than those of the high. A total of 67.7% of the low group's changes are scored in this category as compared with 49.4% of the high group's changes.

Table 9

Distribution of Changes Throughout the Categories

Subject	Change in Information Units Given	Change in Degree of Explicitness of an Idea	Qualitative Change in Expression of Idea	Change in Degree of Generality of an Idea	Change in the Mood of the Verb	Total Number of Changes	Time of Conversation (Av.)	Inverse Frequency of Change (seconds)
H_1	1	2	1	-	-	4	33.3	8.32
H_2	9	2	1	-	-	12	197.6	16.46
H_3	7	4	3	-	-	14	98.0	7.00
H_4	2	2	7	-	-	11	177.6	16.14
H_5	2	3	-	-	-	5	33.3	6.67
H_6	6	2	3	-	1	12	108.3	9.09
H_7	8	2	2	-	-	12	138.0	11.50
H_8	12	1	9	1	-	23	161.3	7.01
H_9	5	4	2	1	1	13	95.6	7.35
H_{10}	2	3	-	-	1	6	57.0	9.50
H_{11}	7	-	5	1	-	13	183.6	14.12
H_{12}	8	3	4	1	2	18	198.3	11.01
H_{13}	3	4	3	-	-	10	87.0	8.70
H_{14}	2	1	-	-	2	5	43.6	8.72
H_{15}	9	1	-	-	-	10	46.3	4.63
Percent of Total Change	49.4	20.2	23.8	2.3	4.2	Average		9.74

Table 9 (Continued)

Subject	Change in Information Units Given	Change in Degree of Explicitness of an Idea	Qualitative Change in Expression of Idea	Change in Degree of Generality of an Idea	Change in the Mood of the Verb	Total Number of Changes	Time of Conversation (Av.)	Inverse Frequency of Change (seconds)
L_1	2	3	-	-	-	5	28.3	5.68
L_2	-	2	-	-	1	3	20.6	6.90
L_3	4	-	-	-	-	4	43.3	10.85
L_4	7	-	2	-	-	9	92.6	10.31
L_5	1	2	-	-	-	3	23.3	7.81
L_6	5	2	1	-	-	8	75.0	9.37
L_7	5	2	1	-	-	8	57.3	7.16
L_8	3	1	2	-	-	6	45.3	7.58
L_9	2	2	-	-	-	4	43.6	10.99
L_{10}	2	-	-	-	1	3	46.6	15.33
L_{11}	5	2	-	-	-	7	45.6	6.52
L_{12}	4	-	1	-	1	6	38.0	6.33
L_{13}	14	-	-	-	-	14	211.6	15.11
L_{14}	4	2	-	-	1	7	50.6	7.22
L_{15}	3	-	-	-	1	4	28.0	7.00
Percent of Total Change	67.7	19.9	7.9	0	4.4	Average		8.95

In both groups, most information was added and least omitted for the peer audience. (Four information "units" were omitted by the high group for the peer and 25 added: two were omitted by the low group and 18 added.) In both cases, the information which was added for the peers tended to be "minute details." One subject ($\#H_8$), for example, told the peer that she had a flashlight to see the spider shadows on the wall, a detail perhaps considered unnecessary for the older audiences. Similarly, another subject ($\#H_{12}$) who told about a scary ride at Disneyland, added to the peer:

> "But the plane's hooked on to this middle pole, you know."

A subject in the low socio-economic group ($\#L_{14}$), after describing how she had had "ninety needles" in her arm which had bled for three days, told the peer,

> "like you have to wash them off and everything."

The extra information seems almost an attempt to fill in the context, possibly unfamiliar, for the peers, as though it is assumed that the older audiences would have had similar experiences.

Again for both groups, most information was omitted and least added for the adult audience (although it should be noted that an equal number of information "units" were added by the high socio-economic group for the adult and grade six audiences).

In many cases, the information omitted for the adult might almost be considered "unsuitable," as if the subjects were "censoring" their stories. One subject ($\#H_{11}$), for example, tells about a "sexy lady" to the peer and grade six audiences (much to their amusement!) but does not mention this detail to the adult. Similarly, another

subject ($\#L_{15}$) does not tell the adult about the midnight chase through her cousin's house which delighted the two younger audiences but which would, perhaps, be "frowned upon" by an adult.

Other details omitted to the adult were "personal" ones, such as:

"You know the twins? Well they were there too." ($\#L_6$)

and

"Aww, you know my brother!" ($\#L_{12}$)

In sum, then, the existence of this category suggests that the subjects' communication to the most intimate audience (the peer) contained most detail whereas that to the most distance audience (the adult) contained least. Interestingly, the results with the grade six audience, for both groups, fell somewhere between the other two audiences, examples of all the afore-mentioned types of detail occurring.

The existence of this category would appear to agree with Moffett's hypothesis that as we re-tell past experience we choose appropriate details from the original "verbal stream" of direct experience. That this choice is affected by the distance of the audience would seem to be reflected in the extra "minute" details which were given to the peers, the communication to the nearest audience most resembling that original "verbal stream." Similarly, the communication to the most distant audience (the unfamiliar adult) contained least detail.

2. Change in the Degree of Explicitness of an Idea

Approximately 20% of the changes of each group fell within this category. Unlike the previous category, here the change is not a change of information but rather a change in the detail attached to the same idea when expressed to different audiences. This change in detail has the effect of making the idea more explicit to one audience than to another. The subjects seemed to achieve this effect by means of elaboration.

In some cases, an idea which was simply stated to one audience was expanded for another by means of relevant details.

For example:

"Cherry" (to peer)

"Cherry my big sister in grade seven" (to grade six)

"My sister Cherry, she's older than me" (to adult)

($\#L_1$)

Similarly, inferences were expanded into statements by some subjects:

"I went outside (laughs)" (to peer and grade six)

"I went out and played and I wasn't supposed to" (to adult)

($\#H_9$)

In most cases, however, the elaboration was extra detail which led to a more exact statement:

"She takes it out and puts it on the table" (to peer and grade six)

"She takes the present out—it's a Zulu doll—and she puts it on the table" (to adult)

($\#H_6$)

"I went upstairs" (to peer)

"We went upstairs" (to grade six)

"Kerry's Auntie Lil took me upstairs" (to adult)

($\#H_5$)

Often this "exactness" was reflected in the use of a more precise term of measurement:

"it was part-way open" (to peer)

"the door was open about an inch" (to adult and grade six)

($\#H_{13}$)

"I did it to her too" (to peer and grade six)

"I did it to her three times" (to adult)

($\#H_{12}$)

Or in a more "precise" choice of vocabulary:

"dog" (to peer and grade six)

"black poodle" (to adult)

($\#H_7$)

A third way in which this "precision" is reflected is in the use of modifiers:

"big snakes" (to peer and grade six)

"big, fat, ugly snakes" (to adult)

($\#H_{10}$)

Interestingly, although in the high socio-economic group the greatest degree of explicitness always occurs with the adult audience (or both adult and grade six audiences), more than half (56%) of the low socio-economic group's changes in this category are most explicit with the grade six audience (or both grade six and peer audience).

For example:

"this dog came in and bit me" (to peer and adult)

"all of a sudden this huge, German Shepherd was in the yard and he bit my lip right up" (to grade six)

($\#L_9$)

"long time ago" (to peer and adult)

"last year" (to grade six)

($\#L_6$)

"scary things" (to peer and adult)

"robberies" (to grade six)

($\#L_7$)

The examples in this category, then, reflect a movement from an implicit statement to a more explicit one. With the high SES group this change occurs as the audience becomes more remote. In the low SES group, however, there is a tendency for the subjects to be most explicit with the grade six audience rather than with the most distant audience of unfamiliar adult.

To a certain extent, the existence of this category would appear to agree with the hypotheses of the theorists cited in Chapter 2 that as the audience becomes more remote communication should reflect movement along the implicit-explicit dimension. A slight disagreement occurs, of course, in the finding that the low socio-economic group were often most explicit with the grade six audience rather than with the most distant audience of unfamiliar adult. Interestingly a similar pattern occurs in each of the categories and would appear to reflect the similar tendency revealed in the statistical analysis.

3. Change in the Quality of Expression

Again, changes in this category are concerned with the expression of the same idea across audiences. In some ways the changes may also be considered to be a change in degree of explicitness; however, changes were scored within this category when a qualitative change also took place as a function of audience; responses tending to be more succinct, less verbose and less reliant on gesture for meaning. Interestingly, whereas 23.8% of the high socio-economic group's changes fall within this category, 11 subjects out of the 15 exhibiting examples of this sort, only 7.7% of the low socio-economic group's changes lie here and only five of the subjects contribute examples to the category. Moreover, again, almost half of the low group's examples in this category (48%) reflect the best "quality" response with the grade six audience.

Most examples in this category reflect a change in the organization of the response; an idea which was expressed to one audience in, perhaps, vague, rambling terms, gesture often playing a vital role in the meaning of the communication, is expressed, to another audience, quite succinctly.

For example:

> "He put his hand like this . . . you know, like . . . (hesitatingly) in a monster way" (to peer)
>
> "He put his hand like this and started making these spider things" (to grade six)
>
> "He opened the door and made a big huge spider shadow" (to adult)
>
> ($\#H_8$)

"this skeleton thing . . . umm, one of those funny skeletons?" (to peer)

"this skeleton . . . like you know, one of those for experiments" (to grade six)

"one of those experimental skeletons" (to adult)

($\#H_8$)

"She went and looked around for their truck but there was no truck" (to peer)

"She looked around for the truck but she could not see it" (to grade six)

"there was no sign of the truck" (to adult)

($\#H_4$)

An example from the low socio-economic group follows. Note that again the greatest change occurs with the grade six audience.

"we had goose bumps and stuff and like we were shivering and everything" (to peer)

"we had umm . . . like goose bumps and like we were shivering like" (to adult)

"we were shivering and goose bumps all over" (to grade six)

($\#L_9$)

Other examples within this category represent a "stylistic" change, as in the following example with the movement away from the comic-book style (which was, perhaps, felt to be most appropriate for the peer audience?).

"Bang! Crash! Slide!" (to peer and grade six)

"Crashing noises downstairs" (to adult)

($\#H_{14}$)

Most "stylistic" changes were reflected in choice of vocabulary, not merely a more precise vocabulary as in the previous category

but rather more appropriate, often leading to a more succinct statement.

For example:

"it was not real" (to peer and grade six)

"it was false" (to adult)

($\#H_4$)

Another example from the same subject:

"she saw this thing—this funny-shaped thing" (to peer)

"she saw this funny looking thing" (to grade six)

"she saw this mantel" (to adult).

In the following example from the low socio-economic group, the "better" choice of vocabulary occurs with both the peer and grade six audiences.

"the character in the book" (to peer and grade six)

"the guy, the person in the book" (to adult)

($\#L_4$)

Although this category, like the previous one, reflects movement along an implicit-explicit dimension, many of the qualitative changes would appear to reflect a movement in a second dimension, namely from quantity to essence, and hence do perhaps lend some support to Moffett's hypothesis that as the audience becomes more remote, communication reflects movement along a quantity-essence continuum. Again, however, although the high SES group reflect this movement as the audience becomes more remote, many of the results of the low socio-economic group reflect this tendency with the grade six audience rather than with the adult.

The two final categories contain few examples, comprising between them only 6.4% of the high group's changes and 4.4% of the low group's changes. They are, however, considered worthy of discussion as the examples contained therein are distinct from the other categories, and, despite their paucity, are perhaps indicative of a trend.

4. Change in the Degree of Generality

Only 2.3% of the high socio-economic group's changes lie in this category and the low group exhibit no such changes.

Changes in this category reflect an attempt on the part of the subject to make a generalization from more specific details.

For example:

"I was only five, so it was quite scary" (to peer)

"I was only five so it was kinda scary" (to grade six)

"it's kind of scary 'cos your parents are not there (to adult)

($\#H_9$)

"Jane's really nice to Mrs. White's little girl" (to peer and grade six)

"Jane loves children" (to adult)

($\#H_{11}$)

Yet again this category offers some support for a suggestion of Moffett's, namely that for a more remote audience communication will be more general in nature. As the ability to form generalizations, however, is a higher order skill, it is hardly surprising that so few examples of this sort exist in a language sample from middle elementary school children. Nevertheless, it is perhaps indicative of a trend

which would be more evident with older subjects.

5. Change in the Mood of the Verb

Both groups have an approximately equal proportion of changes in this category (4.16% of the high SES group's and 4.4% of the low's). Basically, changes in this category are changes from the active to passive mood of the verb, with audience.

For example:

"I thought it was coming towards . . ." (to peer)

"It seemed like it was coming towards . . ." (to grade six and adult)

($\#H_{14}$)

"I had to get bathed in a sink" (to peer)

"they bathed me in a sink" (to grade six and adult)

($\#H_{9}$)

One (25%) of the changes from the low group reflects the use of the passive voice with the peer rather than with the adult:

"It scared me so bad" (to peer)

"I got so scared" (to grade six and adult)

($\#L_{15}$)

Although such a change is not anticipated in the literature (see Chapter 2), the subjects who give examples in this category almost seem to be attempting to "decentre" and to make statements which are less "personal" or "self-centred" in orientation—a vital process, surely, if successful communication with a distant audience is to ensue.

As a significant difference existed between the two groups in the duration of their responses, it was impossible to tell from a simple frequency count whether one group exhibited more changes than the other as a function of audience.

Thus, in order to address research question 4 (namely whether any difference may be discerned in the kinds of changes exhibited by the two groups), an "inverse frequency" of change was calculated by dividing the average length of conversation for each subject by the number of changes made:

$$\frac{\text{Mean Length in Seconds}}{\text{Number of Changes Made}}$$

In effect, this computation spaces the changes regularly through the conversation and hence makes possible a direct comparison between subjects. As the figure obtained from such a computation is a measure of the time lapse between changes, a larger number would indicate a lesser degree of change.

As may be seen from Table 9, virtually no difference exists between the two groups in the amount of change which occurred, the average "inverse frequency" for the high socio-economic group being 9.74 and for the low group, 8.95.

This would seem to indicate that both groups exhibited a similar degree of audience awareness. However, as again may be seen from Table 9, and the discussion above, marked differences do exist in the patterns of differentiation between the two groups.

One major difference lies in the concentration of changes for each group in the various categories. Whereas both groups change most in the information given to the three audiences, a far greater

proportion of the low group's changes lie in this category (67.7% as compared to 49.4%). The high group, on the other hand, appear to make far more "qualitative" changes and generally applicable statements than do the low group.

A further interesting difference between the two groups lies in the finding that the low socio-economic group often produces most change with the grade six audience. This stands in marked contrast to the high group who consistently give their most explicit, best "quality" and most general statements to the adult audience.

Such a finding is, perhaps, reflected in an observation which the investigator made at the time of data collection, namely that there was a marked difference between the two groups in their "body language" when speaking to the adult audience. Although an analysis of such behaviour is beyond the scope of the present study, it is interesting to note the different "reactions" of the two groups.

Whereas both groups reacted quite similarly to the experimental situation when speaking to the peer and grade six audiences, a marked difference existed in their reaction to the adult. In the high group, even the apparently nervous subjects sat reasonably still while talking to the adult, just perhaps swinging their legs or moving their hands nervously. Eye contact was rarely completely avoided, most subjects looking away while pausing but looking at the adult to speak. A few subjects did avoid eye contact for most of the conversation but tended to glance at the audience at the end of a phrase or sentence, as if for feedback. In the low socio-economic group, on the other hand, the subjects, on the whole, seemed far more "ill at

ease" with the unfamiliar adult audience and many fidgetted constantly, avoiding eye contact and often, in contrast to the high group, pausing while glancing at the audience and speaking while looking away.

In sum, by and large, the low socio-economic group appeared far more "uncomfortable" with the unfamiliar adult audience than did the high socio-economic group, a fact perhaps reflected in the finding that the low socio-economic group often performed most similarly to the high group when speaking to the grade six audience.

SYNTHESIS

Question One

> In what ways, if any, do middle elementary school children modify their language as a function of an increasingly remote audience?

The theories reviewed in Chapter 2 suggest that as an audience becomes more remote communication should reflect movement along the following continua:

implicit-explicit (Piaget, Vygotsky, Moffett, Bernstein, Werner and Kaplan)

specific-general
quantity-essence
} (Moffett)

Moreover, the findings of the research studies cited imply that the language responses of pre-schoolers (Maratsos, 1971, 1973; Peterson, 1975; Shantz & Gelman, 1973) through to adults (Kaplan, 1967; Kraus & Glucksberg, 1977) will reflect a movement along an implicit-explicit dimension, according to differing listener attributes.

The results of the statistical analysis for the present study,

however, indicate that audience has no significant effect on clause, pronoun and maze usage, nor on the duration of the response. It is thus possible that, contrary to the suggestions of the literature, children of this age do not differentiate as a function of an increasingly remote audience and rather require the more artificial distancing provided in other research such as a blindfold (Maratsos, 1973), a screen (Krauss & Glucksberg, 1977), or a picture (Flavell et al., 1968).

The results of the descriptive analysis, however, suggest that even if no change was occurring at the level of surface structure, the subjects were, nevertheless, making some modifications in their communication. The following categories of change were identified:

—change in the information units given

—change in the degree of explicitness of an idea

—qualitative change in the expression of an idea

—change in the degree of generality of an idea

—change in the mood of the verb.

As already mentioned in the previous section, Category 2 would seem to reflect the anticipated movement from implicit to explicit, while Categories 1, 3 and 4 appear to lend some support to Moffett's hypothetical movement along the following dimensions:

quantity-essence

specific-general

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the results of Tough's ongoing study of the Interactional Use of Language will be of great importance for our appreciation of the audience dimension of communication.

However, as all the language samples of the present study are examples of her "Relational Function," then a possible hypothesis at this point is that the categories identified above may be examples of strategies at work within the Interactional Use of Language.

Question Two

> Can differences be discerned in the modifications made (as a function of audience) in the oral language of middle elementary school children of different socio-economic backgrounds?

Implicit in the writing of Bernstein is the idea that a certain section of the population, who have a particular sociological background in common, do not, under general circumstances, modify their language as a function of audience. Tough, too, hypothesizes a failure on the part of her low socio-economic subjects to adequately envisage the communicative needs of their audience. Moreover, she attributes the differences between her high and low groups, on a variety of language tasks, to this lack of audience awareness.

The findings of the present study on both the descriptive and statistical analyses suggest that SES may indeed be related to the subjects' ability to modify their language as a function of audience.

The significant interaction effect obtained in the statistical analysis for clause usage, points to a difference which exists between the two groups on their performance with the adult audience. That this difference is not peculiar to this one measure is suggested in the similar pattern which emerged on the other measures. Moreover, the finding is further supported by the implication of the descriptive

analysis that the two groups performed most similarly with the grade six audience and least similarly with the adult.

SES appears to be a factor affecting performance with different audiences in so far as, for the low SES group, there appeared to be an optimum distance between addressor and addressee with which they coped similarly to the high socio-economic group, but beyond which their performance markedly differed.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A summary of the study and an outline of the findings are presented in this chapter. Conclusions which may be drawn from these findings are suggested and recommendations for further research are made. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the study.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the study was two-fold:

a. to investigate the effect of audience on the oral language of a sample of 9 year old girls,

b. to examine whether audience had a differential effect according to the socio-economic status of the subjects.

The sample was drawn from four schools within the Edmonton Public School system and comprised two groups of 15 girls. One group was deemed to be of high SES and the other of low SES. Both groups were of similar age and IQ.

Each of the subjects spoke on the same topic ("a scary experience") to three audiences, each at a different degree of intimacy. These were a peer from the same class, a grade six girl from the same school and an unfamiliar adult. The subjects spoke to the audiences on an individual basis and in a random order. The audiences were chosen according to predetermined criteria. Responses

were recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

In order to address the research questions posed by the study, two distinct forms of analysis were carried out. Firstly, two-way analyses of variance, with repeated measures on Factor B, were performed on the subjects' scores for the chosen syntactic measures. Secondly, all intra-subject differences in the language protocols, which occurred as a function of audience, were recorded and categorized.

FINDINGS

Statistical Analysis

A significant interaction effect was found to exist between socio-economic status and audience, regarding the proportion of main clauses used ($p = .03$). No significant results were recorded, however, for maze and pronoun usage. A significant difference ($p = .01$) did occur between the two groups in the duration of their responses.

Descriptive Analysis

The following categories of change were formulated from the subjects' responses:

—change in the information units given

—change in the degree of explicitness of an idea

—qualitative change in the expression of an idea

—change in the degree of generality of an idea

—change in the mood of the verb.

Although no difference was found in the amount of change exhibited by the two groups, a difference was evident in the kinds of

change identified for each group.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to the exploratory nature of this study and the subjective form of analysis employed, no conclusive statements can be made about the relationship between language, audience and socio-economic status. The findings, however, do suggest certain areas which, on further investigation, might prove fruitful.

Question One

> In what ways, if any, do middle elementary school children modify their language as a function of an increasingly remote audience?

The non-significant results of the statistical analysis indicate that further investigation of the relationship between audience and the use of clauses, pronouns, mazes or the duration of the response, would not be worthwhile.

The results of the descriptive analysis, however, indicate that some changes did occur as a function of audience. Although no definitive statement can be made about these changes, the findings do suggest that further investigation of the categories formulated in this study might prove fruitful.

Question Two

> Can differences be discerned in the modifications made, as a function of audience, in the oral language of middle elementary school children of different socio-economic backgrounds?

That a relationship does exist between audience, SES and

oral language is indicated in the tendency for the two groups in question to perform most similarly with the grade six audience and least similarly with the unfamiliar adult. Although no conclusive statement can be made regarding the nature of the relationship, the significant interaction effect obtained between audience and SES for clause usage, reflects this phenomenon and indicates that this measure merits further investigation. The similar tendency observed on the pronoun usage suggests that further study of this measure, too, might prove fruitful.

That this relationship is also reflected in the categories of change formulated by the investigator was indicated by the finding that, even though a similar amount of change occurred, the predominant category of change was different for the two groups. Moreover, a marked difference in the performance of the two groups with the adult audience was evident.

Although a comprehensive analysis of the subjects' changes in "body language" was beyond the scope of the present study, the researcher's observations nevertheless indicate that further investigation of this area would prove valuable.

The findings of the statistical analysis suggest that further investigation of the relationship between audience, SES and maze usage, would not be worthwhile.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study suggest that although audience has no statistically significant effect on the oral language

of middle school pupils, children of different socio-economic backgrounds tend to perform most similarly when speaking with a grade six audience and least similarly with an unfamiliar adult audience.

Although it must be remembered that audience distance is not a simple dimension, but rather impinged upon by other components of the communication situation, nevertheless the implications of such a finding would seem to lie in three distinct areas.

Firstly, researchers should, as Tough suggests, be aware that

> we cannot make statements about children's use of language that hold for any and every situation. (Tough, 1977, p. 157)

Children in so-called "deprived groups" may well have greater resources of language than their typical performances reveal and should be offered a variety of audiences until these resources are tapped.

Secondly, teachers should be aware of the audience dimension in their language arts program. The distance between child and audience should only gradually be increased, the teacher constantly helping the child to build up strategies that are effective for communication.

Finally, educators in general should consider that of all the audiences that a child is asked to address in school, an intimate one is the most rare! Yet the results of the present study indicate that some children might need to develop new strategies to address anything other than an intimate audience. All too often it is forgotten that,

> The skills that are developed through the experiences of participating in dialogue are those skills of thinking and of using language that would seem to provide the very basis from which education can proceed. (Tough, 1977, p. 176)

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APPENDIX

A SAMPLE LANGUAGE PROTOCOL

A SAMPLE LANGUAGE PROTOCOL

SUBJECT: $\#H_8$

AUDIENCE: PEER

I'm going to tell you about when I went to my friend Janie's house and when we, - how scared to death by her brother. See, I went over to her house, I don't know, it was about a couple o' weeks ago and er my cousin had just left and she told me umm a story about the Giant Spider invasion. Well anyways, we went to sleep and she closed her door and I can't stand the door closed at night, so I was scared. And at about midnight, you know her brother came in . . . and like he'd seen the movie when it was playing here, and he, like he, started saying all these scary things and tape recordings and um (cough) he put his hand you know like this - you know like (hesitatingly) in a monster-way and each time the flashlight turned on it, it looked like a giant spider and I was really really scared and I pulled the sleeping bag over me - we were sleeping in sleeping bags. And he stood there yet and I didn't know what was happening so I felt over to see if Janie was still there and you know she had rolled over and like I couldn't feel her. I thought "Oh n-no! The spider has got her. There's no, there's nothing left of her any more." So I felt in her sleeping bag (laughing) I felt around and then I felt her and I said "Wake up! Wake up!" And we got enough courage and we got up to see what it was. You know then we saw him - we saw her brother running down the hall and we really knew - we were really mad at him and we went in, and we went over and we were chasing him around the house. And um ---

h --- her mum and dad woke up, got up because of the noise? And Janie said, "Well umm, Rob's bugging us. He's scaring us and we went to his room and he's pretending to be asleep." He was asleep! So we thought, you know, oh no!, you know, that, could that have been the real thing? And so we went back to bed. And then he came up again. Except like he had got this skeleton thing - umm one of those funny skeletons? - and he stuck it in the room. And he said "Hey you guys! Come here!" and when you opened the door there was this skeleton standing right face to face with us. And we were so scared. You know how that feels?

(Audience: Ooh!)

Just scary! So anyways, we like, we umm pushed it out of the way and we were chasing him - around the house 'cos you know he wouldn't pretend he was g - he was asleep. And so I was chasing him and Janie went to get her mum and dad to find out it was all a trick and stuff.

It's pretty funny after a while. It still makes me - you know - gives me goose pimples when I, you know, still think about it. Like right now I'm all shaking 'cos it's really scary!

AUDIENCE: GRADE 6

I'm going to tell you about the time I went to my friend Janie's and I got scared to death by her brother.

(Laughs from both)

Yea, like um my cousin had just - you know - left our house er it's about a month ago and she told me you know about this movie she'd seen called the Giant Spider Invasion. And um and I went over to Janie's house and we went to sleep and at about midnight her brother came in and started making all these spooky noises and um like he saw the movie cos like it was playing here. He saw the movie and um --- he put his hand like this and he started making these spider things and you know we were screaming and everything and I was throwing the sleeping bag over me - cos we were sleeping in sleeping bags - and --- um um --- I felt over to see if Janie was there, I couldn't feel her. I thought "Oh no! You know, they've got her." And I felt, and I felt some more and you know she was in there. And so we started got, we got up and thought and we saw who it was you know and it was him. We started chasing around --- um --- Her mother and father got up! He pretended he was still asleep! We thought "Oh no!" I thought, "Oh no! Could that be the real thing?" And so we went back to bed. And a little while after he came and he started doing the same thing.

(Aww!)

and he said "Come here you guys!" — like he had this skeleton and he put it right in front of the door

(Aww!)

Like, you know, one of those for experiments?

(Yea!)

Well he put it right by the door and we were coming out, we saw it — and we were face to face with it, you know, we were real scared, we were screaming and everything. And um you know, we were, I'm thinking "Oh no! You know, is this somebody or whatever." We were coming and we see him just running down the hall. Their mum and dad get up again! And, you know, we find out that it was him and --- and it just scared me half to death when I think about it — How scary it was.

AUDIENCE: ADULT

Umm, well I went to my like — this all happened about a month ago. I went to my friend Janie's house --- my cousin had just left from my house and she told me about this movie she had seen, called The Giant Spider Invasion and umm Janie's brother had seen that movie. He had an idea to scare me — us. And so we went to bed and about midnight we woke up cos there were all these scary noises we could hear and --- and --- he opened the door and made a big huge spider shadow. And then I was reaching over to see if Janie was there and she wasn't — like I couldn't feel her and I thought "Oh no, you know" "Could the spider have gotten her?" And so you know I felt some more and I felt her so you know we were really scared and I pulled the er — you know — sleeping bag over me. And we went and we saw her brother running down the hall. And so um and her mum and dad woke up and he pretended he was still asleep! And we went back to bed and I thought to myself "Oh" you know "Could that really have been the real thing?" So we went to bed again and a little while later he did the same thing. Like he had one of these experimental skeletons, you know, he put it in the doorway and said "Come and get me girls" and we went and we were face to face with this skeleton. And you, you know w-we were real scared and Janie went to get her mum and dad to find out it was all a trick. And I get me goose pimples just thinking about it and everything. When I think about it I - you know - it makes me think you know um wouldn't it be really scary if it was the real thing? You'd get goose pimples all over you.